

The New Krofft Supershow

glo A GOLDEN ★★★★★
ALL★STAR BOOK



The New Krofft Supershow



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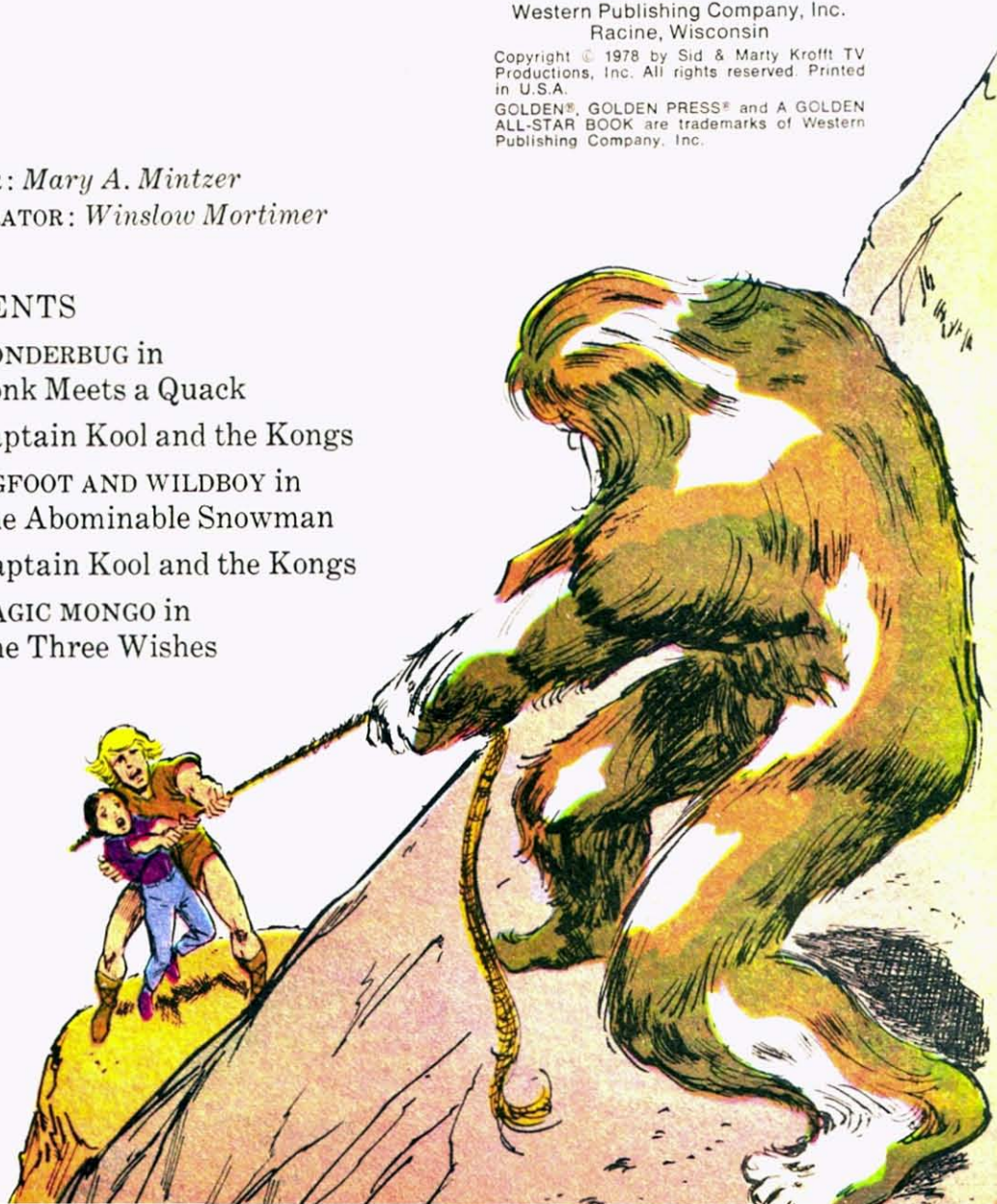
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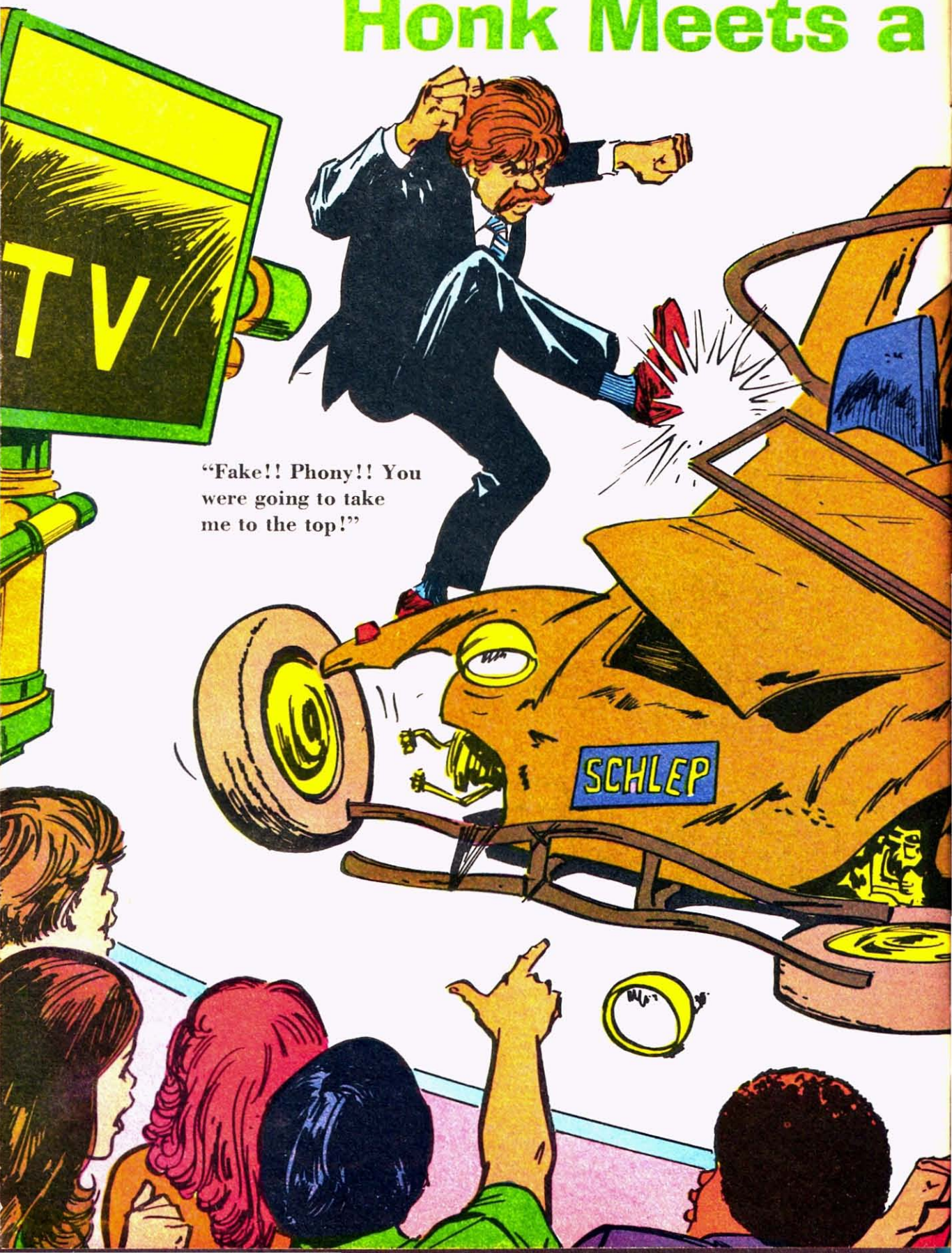
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WONDERBUG!

Honk Meets a



"Fake!! Phony!! You
were going to take
me to the top!"

Quack



“C HUG-A-LUG-LUG, three kids in a bug...”

“Hey, gang... Schlep’s singing!” said Barry.

“Oh, oh,” said C.C. “do you think he’s trying to tell us something?”

“Let the car alone!” Susan patted Schlep’s rear fender. “Oops!!” One touch was all it needed.

Clatter Clatter. Bump! Bump!!

“Oh no, not again!” Barry brought the jalopy to a halt as Susan jumped out to pick up the fender and put it back where it belonged.

Puff, puff, chug, chug. They were on their way again.

“Here we come!” sang out C.C. “I feel so good I could honk!”

“Silly,” said Susan. “That’s Schlep’s job.”

“Can’t you take a joke?” C.C. caught his beanie as it blew off in a gust of wind. “Phew... got it. Don’t want to lose you, old friend.”

Over hill, down dale they puffed, wheezed and bumped along the winding road, letting Schlep take the lead. Well, sort of. Actually it sounded like Schlep’s last ride.

Crash! Craaaaack!
“What happened? Did we hit something?” C.C. jumped out of the car.

“I don’t know,” Barry

listened to the engine, but didn’t like what he heard. Whirrrrr. Moannnn. Sniffle.

“Look!” said C.C. He held up a cardboard container covered with yellow goo.

“Schlep ran over a carton of eggs!” Susan got out of the car to examine the evidence. Egg yolks were everywhere, spattered all over the road, on Schlep, and now, on C.C.

“C’mon, let’s go,” said Barry. “It’s too bad but we can’t put them together again. Remember Humpty Dumpty!”

Schlep collapsed in the middle of the road. His headlights rolled off into the bushes. His fenders clattered to the ground. His tires hissed sadly as the air escaped to a place where it would do more good.

“What’s wrong with him?”

Barry looked at the sorry little car. “He feels bad, C.C. I shouldn’t have said anything about Humpty Dumpty.”

“But they’re just eggs!”

CRASH! Schlep’s license fell off.

“I don’t think you boys really understand,” said Susan. “Schlep feels guilty that he hit the eggs...”

Blurp. Schlep heaved a sigh, then, exhausted, sank into silence.

“What’d he say?” C.C. scratched his head.

Barry translated. "He said, 'I might have killed a future chicken.'"

"Great fried frogs' legs!" exclaimed C.C. "It's only a few crummy eggs. Probably rotten anyway. Why else would anyone leave them in the middle of the road to be run over?" He turned and spoke directly to Schlepcar. "Listen, it's not your fault. No more than all the bugs that hit the window when we're moving fast."

Floop! Schlep's body finally hit the ground. Not one ounce of air was left in his tires.

"What do you think you're doing anyway?" Barry was angry. "You're making poor Schlep feel even worse!"

"C'mon fellows. Give me a hand." Susan was picking up Schlep's fallen parts. "Let's put him together again and be off."

Quickly they repaired their beloved jalopy. Then they climbed in, ready to go.

Chug. Chug. Phffffft. . .

"The engine won't catch," said Barry. "Schlep won't move." He patted the car's battered brass horn. "Do it, Schlep! Do it for us!"

But Schlep wouldn't do it . . . couldn't do it . . . for anyone. He didn't even have enough energy to honk up Wonderbug.

One hour later Barry made a decision. "We need a *real* mechanic. Schlep's in

trouble and we'll be too if we can't pull him out of it."

"But we're in the middle of the country. . . ."

"Then, Susan, we're going to have to walk," replied Barry. "We'll find a phone . . . or a farm . . . whichever comes first. Then call."

"I'll stay with Schlep," volunteered C.C. "You two take the hike."

"Good of you," snorted Barry.

"Anything to oblige, old man!" C.C. tilted his beanie over one eye and lay back in Schlep's rear seat, his feet resting over the car's side.

"Let's go, Barry. I'm really worried about Schlep."

SUSAN AND BARRY SET OFF on the country dirt road. They walked and walked for miles, it seemed. The day was hot and getting hotter.

"I don't know how much longer I can continue," said Barry, stopping to take off his shoes and shake out the gravel.

"Where are we? How come there are no farm-houses, no other vehicles on the road?"

"You were the one who wanted to take this quaint country road, remember?" Barry was cross. But Susan was way ahead of him.

"Look!" she pointed straight ahead. "A phone booth! Right in that grove of trees. In the middle of

nowhere. Now who'd imagine that?"

Breathless, they ran to the booth.

Susan searched the yellow pages. "Here's *exactly* the kind of help we're looking for." She pointed to a large ad that read:

NEED HELP?

CALL DR. MARVIN HONKWELL

Mechanic extraordinaire,
fixer of fallen cars.

Just dial AXLEGREASE, that's
(295) 347-3273

Guaranteed repairs. 21-day
trial or your \$ back
*"I can make your car feel so
good it'll fly!"*

"It's perfect!" exclaimed Susan. "If he can't fix Schlepcar, no one can."

"We'll see," muttered Barry. "Sounds like he'll do anything to scare up business. What's that number again? Oh yeah. AXLE-GREASE. Pretty cute. Too cute for me." He jabbed at the dial.

"Well, beggars can't be choosers . . ."

"Hello. Yeah." Barry spoke into the receiver. "My name's Barry and I'm stuck on a country road about 30 miles north of Beaverton. You know the booth? Yeah . . ."

Susan tried to listen into the conversation but all she could hear was a man's voice, fuzzy in the back-ground.

"How long will it take you to get here? No, we can't move. We'll need a tow. Forty-five minutes? Sounds like a long time. Try to make it in thirty and we'll be grateful." He hung up.

"Dr. Honkwell's man is driving a towtruck out to pick us up and we'll lead him to Schlep. The doctor doesn't make road calls..."

"Hope he doesn't take too long," said Susan. "It's getting dark and I'm feeling chilly."

ONE HOUR LATER a battered red towtruck rolled up to the phone booth. Barry opened the door and climbed into the cab, followed by Susan. The person at the wheel could have been anywhere between 15 and 45 with carrot-colored hair, reddish-brown eyes and big yellow teeth. They thought it was a man, but they couldn't be certain.

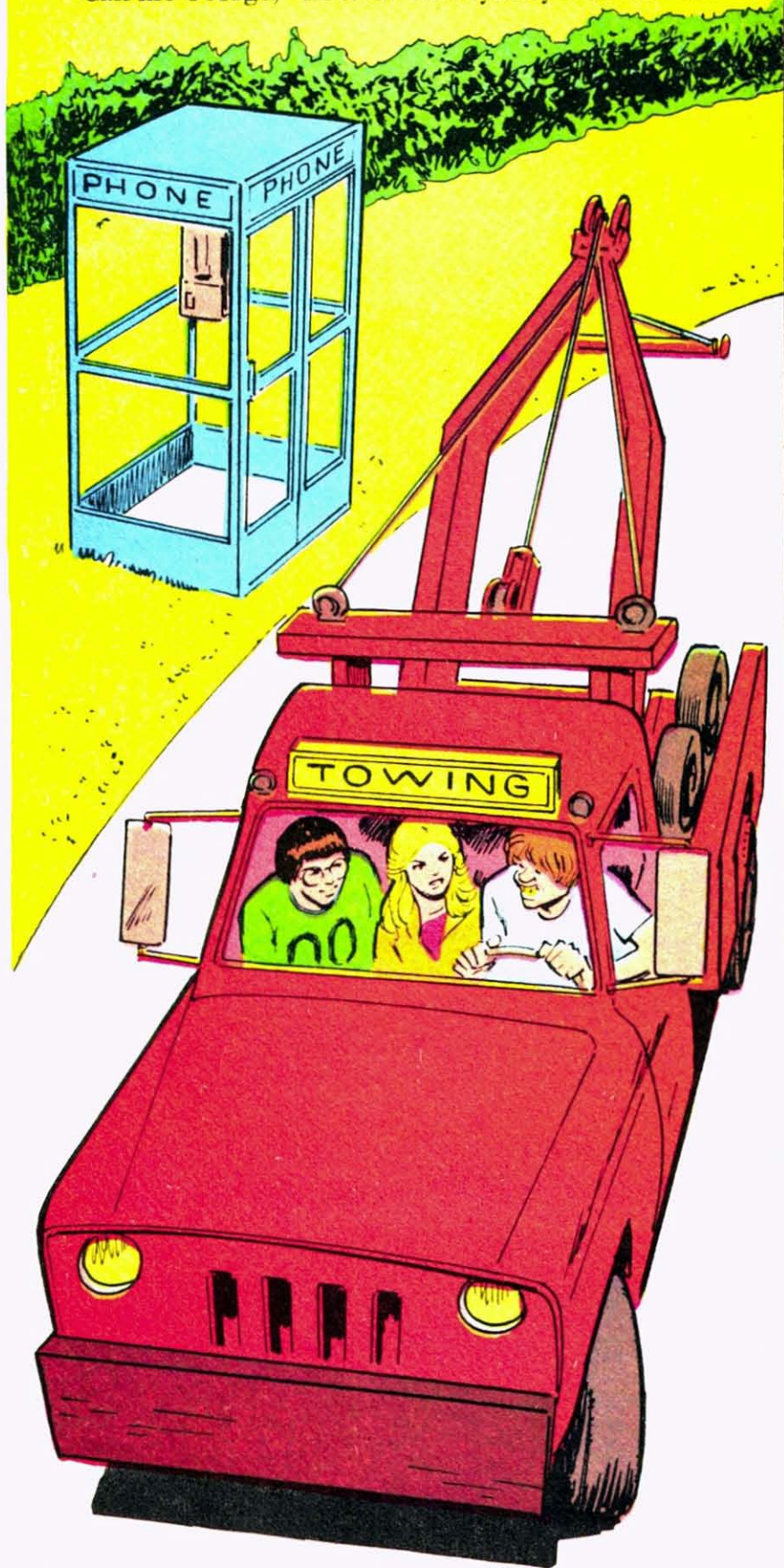
"Call me George," he said. "Everyone else does. You the kids who called Dr. Honkwell?"

"Yes," said Barry. "Let's go. We have a car to fix."

Soon they reached Schlep, looking forlorn and helpless in the middle of the road. C.C. was asleep, sprawled in the back seat where they left him.

"Wake up, C.C.!" Barry shouted. "We're here with the towtruck."

"Call me George," he said. "Everybody else does..."



Gently, George, Susan, C.C. and Barry hooked Schlep to the towtruck. The little car was too weak to protest. C.C. released the brake, put Schlep in neutral, and they were off.

Meanwhile, back at the garage, Dr. Honkwell paced his cluttered office, muttering to himself, his hands clasped behind his back.

"What is a genius, a brilliant doctor like me doing in a dump like this?" He threw up his hands. "The world owes me a living . . . I can't spend the rest of my days as an auto mechanic. I want money, money, MONEY . . . AND FAME!!!"

Putt! Sputterr . . . Wheeze!

"Who's making that infernal noise?" Annoyed, he looked out the window. George had returned with the towtruck, three healthy-looking kids and the sickest car Dr. Honkwell had ever seen. He walked out, pointed at poor Schlep and said, "What's this you're bringing me? World War I surplus iron??? That wreck should be in the junkyard!"

A shudder ran through Schlep's frame.

Barry piled out of the truck, followed by Susan and C.C.

"Look here, that's our car you're talking about. We didn't ask for insults. Can you fix it or can't you?"

"Your ad said you could cure anything . . ." began Susan.

"I am the great Honkwell . . . DOCTOR Honkwell to you . . . children . . ." he wrinkled his nose.

"Children!!!" Those were fighting words to C.C.

Dr. Honkwell ignored the outburst.

"I can cure anything. Even this . . . this . . ."

"Please, Dr. Honkwell," Susan ran over and grabbed his arm. "Please, Schlep's more than a car to us . . ."

"Susan!" Barry snapped a warning.

"He's a friend . . ." continued C.C. "In fact, he's more than a friend."

"Shut up, you two! We can go elsewhere if the Doctor doesn't want our business."

But Dr. Honkwell was interested. What made this wreck so special?

"Schlep is *really* WONDERBUG," blurted Susan.

"SHHHH! I told you never to tell anybody!" Barry hissed through clenched teeth. His eyes were hard as rock.

"Wonderbug?" asked the Doctor.

"Yeah," said C.C. proudly. "He's a real supercar . . . only . . . something's really wrong with him. He ran over a carton of eggs this morning and is sad because he thinks he killed a

chicken. . . ."

"Hmmmm . . . obviously a sensitive instrument," mused the doctor, hand on his chin. "I will take a look at him. And please pardon my outburst. I was in a bad mood . . . you know, we all have them sometimes."

"Oh thanks," breathed Susan.

"I think we should take Schlep elsewhere," said Barry coldly.

"But Bar . . ." said C.C. "The doctor's agreed to look at him . . . besides we couldn't move him if we tried."

"It's two against one," agreed Susan. "This is a democracy, isn't it? Majority rules. Schlep stays here."

"I don't like it," growled Barry. "I just don't like it."

Dr. Honkwell rubbed his hands together and motioned to George to take Schlep into the garage.

"Aha," he thought, "this may be the jackpot! Finally I've found a vehicle to take me to the top!!! All I have to do is bring this car totally under my powers!"

He swept the kids into his diploma-filled waiting room, then disappeared into the gloomy garage.

"I don't trust him," said Barry in a loud whisper. "That's no honk doctor . . . he's a quack doctor!"

"But Barry," said Susan, "We had no choice."

C.C. interrupted. "I think you're making a mountain out of a . . ."

The door flew open and Dr. Honkwell appeared in the room, a serious look on his face.

"It looks bad. Very bad. Your vehicle is depressed and will require my all-night attention. Come back at noon tomorrow and he'll be good as new."

"But . . ." Before Barry could protest, Susan and C.C. shoved him out the door.

Susan glanced over her shoulder. "Okay, Doctor."

THE NEXT DAY Barry, Susan and C.C. arrived

at twelve sharp to claim their car. Dr. Honkwell met them at the garage entrance and led them inside. As they entered they could hear VROOM VROOM . . . a powerful engine. It sounded familiar.

There in all his glory stood . . . WONDERBUG!, headlights shining brightly, fenders gleaming.

"I gave him a complete going-over and George polished him up good as new. Now am I the greatest or am I the greatest?"

Susan and C.C. ran over to the pulsating powerhouse. "Wonderbug! It's really you!!"

"What exactly did you do?" asked Barry sus-

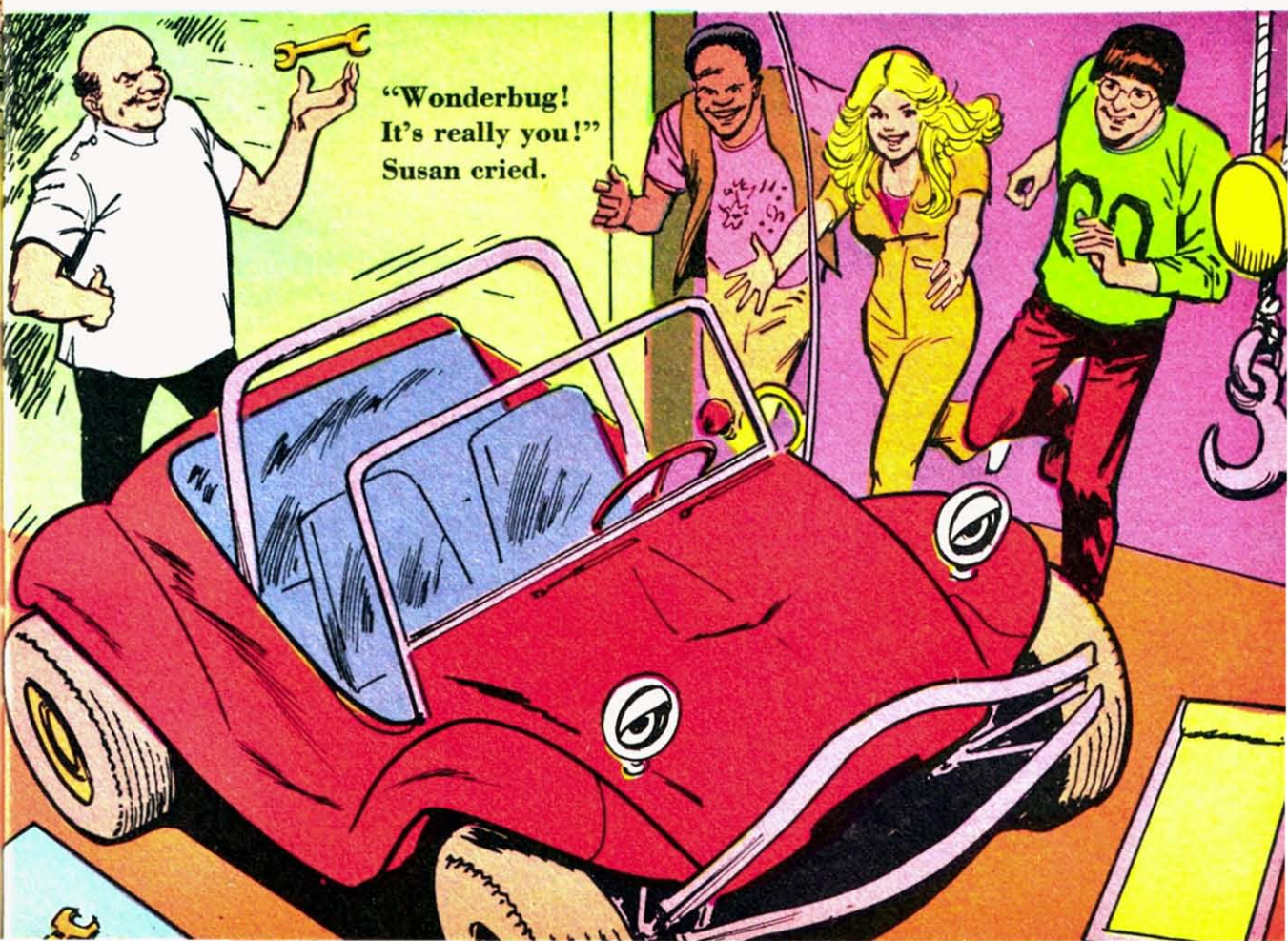
piciously.

"Doctor's secrets, doctor's secrets," twinkled Dr. Honkwell. "Crummy kid," he thought. "Better butter him up. He's too nosey as it is. But my time is coming . . . in fact, it'll be here by tomorrow!" The doctor could barely hide his satisfaction.

"Why not give it a spin," he said. "Try it out."

"We brought in Schlep, not Wonderbug," whispered Barry. "What's going on here, anyway?"

"You're just looking for trouble, Barry," Susan jumped into the back seat of the eager car. "WONDERBUG is just Schlep's way of saying 'I'm better!'"



CLAPPER'S FALLS NATIONAL B



"Okay," Barry spoke to Dr. Honkwell. "We'll try it out."

With a roar they raced out of the garage. C.C. and Susan glanced back to see Dr. Honkwell waving. No sooner did the doctor disappear in the distance than they heard a fateful honk.

Foom!

The amazing Wonderbug vanished. In his place was Schlep, moaning and wheezing under the weight of his riders.

"That shouldn't have happened," said Barry.

"Maybe Schlep's just acting up. Let's take him into town and see how he's doing."

C.C. pointed to a roadside sign.

CLAPPER'S FALLS, 1 MILE
AS THE CROW FLIES
FOOD DRINK LODGING
BRING \$\$\$

The little auto panted ahead, but clearly, something was wrong. Schlep just wasn't his old self.

"He seemed so fine at the garage. . . ." C.C. was puzzled.

"That was Wonderbug," said Barry. "I just wonder if that 'Doctor' Honkwell discovered Schlep's secret, the magic horn. Somehow I don't think so, but how else did Schlep become Wonderbug?"

"Maybe he did it himself," said Susan, "because the Doctor did something to make him feel good. . . ."

BACK IN HIS GARAGE, Honkwell was busy on the phone.

"Station KRZY-TV? Yes, this is Dr. Honkwell. I'll deliver the headlighter tomorrow for the 8 p.m. show. Yes, we'll be there on time."

He slammed the phone down and rubbed his hands

gleefully. "Within an hour I'll have that car standing before me . . . MINE, ALL MINE! And after the going-over I give it, it'll never respond to anyone else again! Heh heh heheheheheheheh."

"C'mon Schlep. You can make it!" Barry spoke softly as the little car wheezed its way into Clapper's Falls.

"Let's give it a rest, Barry." Susan pointed to a parking place across the street from Clapper's Falls National Bank.

"Okay."

Puff. Groan, SSSSSsssss!

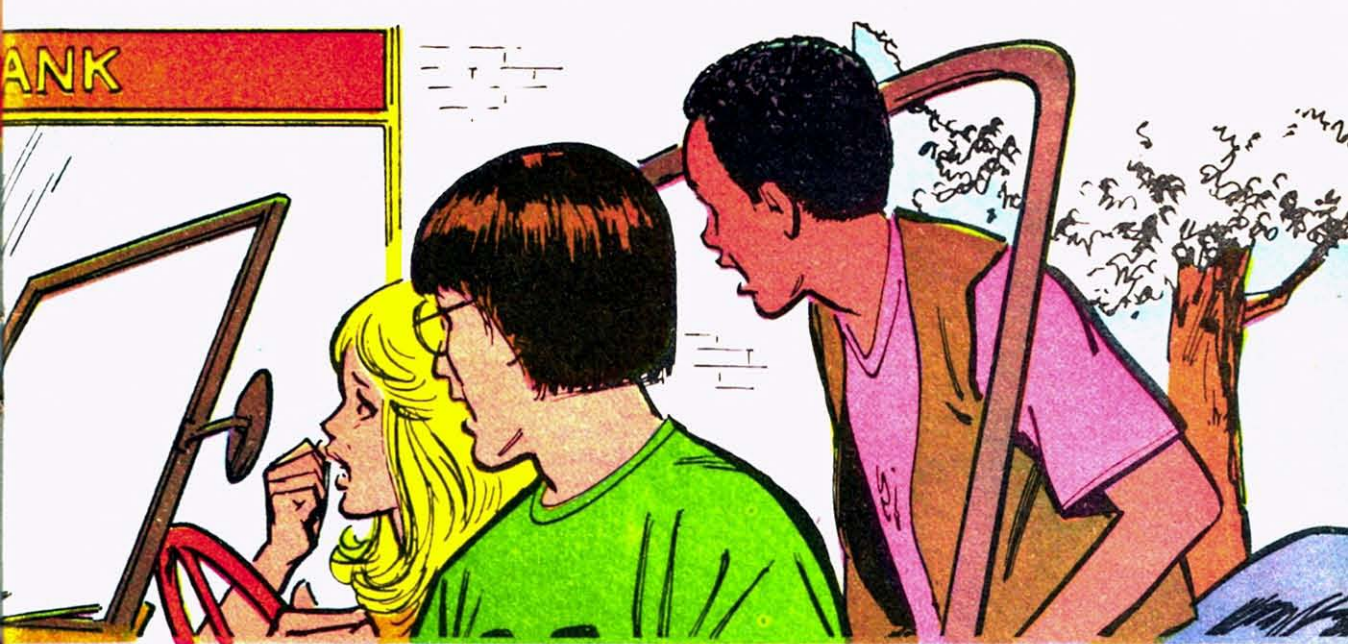
C.C. shook his head. "Sure doesn't sound any better."

Bang . . . Bang!

"Help!"

Suddenly the doors of Clapper's Falls National Bank flew open and a pair of robbers ran out, smoking pistols in one hand, money bags in the other.

"Hold it or we'll nail ya to



the walls!" snarled the taller one. "Hurry, Harry, the car!" They ran toward the curb and disappeared into a beaten-looking coupe idling at the corner.

"Gosh!" Susan's eyes widened.

"It's real, isn't it?" asked C.C.

"You bet it is!" declared Barry. "*This* is a job for Wonderbug!"

But the little car just stood there. No honk. Nothing.

"Maybe he needs some help," said Susan.

C.C. pressed the horn. "I'll give him a hand. . . ."

No sound. "Do it again." Still nothing.

"What's wrong with you anyway, Schlep?" Barry was furious. "Look. Those gangsters are getting away and the only one who could stop them . . . Wonderbug . . . is out to lunch somewhere. . . ."

Schlep backfired. Then, weakly, he turned over his

engine, released his brake and headed back in the direction they came from.

"Do you see that?" exclaimed C.C. "He's not even listening to us anymore!!"

"Where are we going?" asked Susan.

"I'm afraid," said Barry, "that we're heading back to Dr. Honkwell . . . whether we like it or not!"

"HEH HEH HEH, WHAT HAVE WE HERE?"

Rubbing his hands, Dr. Honkwell hurried out to meet the putt-putting Schlep. The poor little car could barely heave its parts into the garage.

HONK . . . HONK . . . HONK KKK!

Barry, Susan and C.C. were startled by the gunning of the magnificent motor, the eager snorting of the exhaust and the unmistakable change in Schlep. One glance at Dr. Honkwell and

there was . . . Wonderbug!

"You're certainly looking fine today," said the Doctor as he patted Wonderbug's fender. The powerful engine purred with delight.

"What's up, man?" whispered C.C. to Barry. "A minute ago Schlep was ready for the junkyard. . . ."

"Yeah," Susan was puzzled. "How are we going to explain *this*?"

"Dr. Honkwell," said Barry, "I don't know quite how to say this, but we drove a sick sick SICK car back to see you. So sick, in fact, that it was ready to collapse. *Now* look at him."

"I told you my work was good . . . and guaranteed. If you have any doubts, why not just leave the car here with me, I'll check it out completely and you can pick it up in the morning."

"But everything's okay now," protested C.C.

"Yes, with Wonderbug . . .

but not with Schlep," said Susan.

Barry stepped out of the car and drew the other two aside.

Dr. Honkwell whispered into Wonderbug's horn. "Remember . . . you are guilty of murdering a chicken . . . but *I* and only I can help you . . . if you cooperate. . . ."

"What's he saying?" asked C.C. in a low voice.

"That's not as important as what he *may* be doing . . ." said Barry. "Somehow it seems that the only time Schlep can honk into Wonderbug is when he's around the doctor.

"Do you think we should leave them together?" asked Susan.

"We have no choice. It's the only way we'll ever know what he's doing to our friend the car." Barry turned to Honkwell. "Okay, Doctor. You can have Schlep until tomorrow morning."

Wonderbug watched without interest as C.C., Barry and Susan walked off into the distance. Sitting in the driver's seat, Dr. Honkwell chuckled evilly. "They've already lost you! . . . but just wait till tonight! *You*, my fine-fendered friend, are taking *me* to the top!"

“WANT SOME PIZZA?”
C.C. was hungry.

"How can you even think of such a thing?" said Susan. "I'm so worried about Schlep, I just don't know what to do!" Absent-mindedly she walked over and turned on the TV.

Their favorite program was just ending.

"AND NOW," said the announcer, "we are happy to present our award-winning news magazine, *50 Minutes*. Tonight's special feature, *Quack Meets Honk*, is the story of a most unusual two-some headed for stardom.

The camera focused on the smiling face of none other than . . . Doctor Marvin Honkwell and his amazing automobile, Sidney Supercar!" There in the brightly-lit TV studio sat Schlep, forlorn as ever, fenders falling, springs popping.

"What!" shouted Barry. "I don't believe it! He's even changed Schlep's name . . . and tried to hide behind a wig and a fake mustache . . . That fraud is just using our Schlepcar to get rich and famous!!!"

They listened in shock as Honkwell's voice came over the TV.

"He wasn't always called Sidney. I changed his name for artistic purposes. Besides, Sidney Supercar will look marvelous on the marquee."

C.C. shook his fist at the screen. "We've got to do

something . . . but what?"

"He's stolen our Schlepcar." Susan shook her head, dazed.

"Yes," said Barry. "And we're getting Schlep back! I've got an idea. . . ."

The announcer continued:

"Very, very interesting. Truly an extraordinary story, Dr. Honkwell. You must show us how this . . . ahem . . . most astonishing car works." He looked down his nose at Schlep.

BREATHLESS, BARRY, SUSAN AND C.C. RAN INTO THE lobby of station KRZY-TV.

"There it is!" C.C. pointed to a sign near the elevators.

50 MINUTES will be broadcast live tonight from studio 970.

"Hurry," said Barry, stepping into the elevator. He pressed 9. "We may still have a chance if Dr. Honkwell hasn't discovered Schlep's magic horn. . . ."

"You think that the doctor only knows that Schlep can turn into Wonderbug, but he doesn't know *how* he does it?"

"Right, Susan. It's just a chance, but maybe . . . if we can get to Schlep's horn. . . ."

" . . . and disconnect it?"

"The whole thing will backfire in Honkwell's face!" said C.C., as the elevator stopped. "There's the studio over there . . . 970."

"Shhhh . . ." Barry motioned for silence as he inched the door open.

Dr. Honkwell was standing barely 15 feet away, whispering to Schlep.

"Remember, Sidney, I made you . . . and I can break you! Remember that crate of eggs. . . . I expect great things of you. Don't let me down. We're about to go on the air. We've practiced the routine. You know it: One . . . Two . . . Three . . . WONDERBUG! . . . it's either that or the junkyard compactor!"

He walked back onstage to speak to the announcer.

"Quick!" Barry gestured to C.C. "You take Schlep's wardrobe trunk . . . the mechanic's outfit . . . Susan, blindfold Schlep's headlights so he won't know what's happening. He's been acting so strange lately that we can't trust him. I'll disconnect the horn."

In a flash the three kids pounced on the bewildered car.

"Ready, C.C.?"

"Got it, Barry!"

"Run!" said Susan. "Here comes Honkwell. . . ."

"SIDNEY! ARE YOU PREPARED? . . . Who are you??" Dr. Honkwell glared at the young man in mechanic's overalls.

"Oh, I'm the station's mechanic, just checking out

your car here," the disguised C.C. motioned toward Schlep.

"I am the great Dr. Marvin Honkwell, fixer of feeble cars. I can make *any* car feel good. You're not needed. Now get out!"

"Ummmmhum!" C.C. nodded, and made a quick exit behind the backstage curtain, where Barry and Susan were hiding. "Phew! That cat isn't playing games!"

"Don't worry," whispered



"We're here, Schlep . . . we're here!"
the kids yelled as they
jumped into the car.



Barry. "We'll cook his goose. Shhhhhh. They're about to begin."

Coughing and wheezing, Schlep followed Dr. Honkwell onstage.

"Are you sure he'll make it?" asked the worried announcer.

"You are about to see a miracle," said Honkwell confidently.

The stage light turned red: ON THE AIR.

The announcer cleared his throat. "Now, ladies and gentlemen, we are about to see this car become . . . SUPERCAR!" With a flourish, he gestured toward the doctor. "Take it away, Dr. Honkwell!"

Rising to his full 5-feet

2 inches, Doctor Honkwell looked at Schlep and began counting, "One . . . two . . . THREE!"

Schlep dropped a fender.

A ripple of laughter swept through the audience. Then silence.

"Uh, Dr. Rockwell . . . is anything wrong?" said the announcer.

Purple-faced, Dr. Honkwell shook his head. His whisper to Schlep had a cutting edge. "Remember . . . in this game it's *two* times and out! One more slip and you'll have a pressing engagement with the compactor!!"

He straightened his bow-tie and began again. This time, louder.

"One . . . TWO . . . THREE!!!"

Schlep dropped another fender. Then a headlight.

The audience guffawed.

Even the announcer giggled. "They didn't tell me this was a comedy act."

Dr. Honkwell exploded. "Those silly kids were right! You really are a Schlepcar! How could I ever have called you Sidney . . . Supercar! How could I be such a fool?"

Enraged, he ran over to the quaking car and kicked it in the tailpipe. Schlep collapsed in a heap.

"Fraud," he screamed, "Fake!! Phony!!! You were going to take me to the top!"
His wig fell off.

The audience roared.

Dr. Honkwell ripped off his fake mustache, threw it on the floor and stomped on it.

This was it! Susan ran onstage and threw her arms around Schlep's steering wheel. Barry jumped into the back seat and C.C. vaulted over the side.

"We're here, Schlep . . . we're here. . ."

The little car chugged and chortled with delight.

"Who are you . . . what is this anyway, a three-ring circus?" the announcer wasn't laughing anymore.

"I'm Barry, this is Susan and that . . ." he pointed to C.C. who was busy attaching Schlep's horn, "is C.C. with *our* Schlepcar!"

Honk, Honk, Vroom, Vroooooom!

The powerful engine of Wonderbug filled the studio.

"Help! Let me up!! HELP!" The audience watched in amazement, as the hapless Dr. Honkwell was pinned, helpless but unhurt, between Wonderbug's radial wheels.

"Do *we* have a story to tell you . . ." began Barry.

"This wasn't in the script," moaned the announcer, pulling at his hair.

Riiiiiiiiing . . . Rinnnnnng.

"Mr. Announcer, Mr. Announcer," a secretary ran onstage. "We're flooded with calls. . ."

Honk! Suddenly Schlep reappeared.

The bewildered announcer looked from the secretary to the car to the ringing phones. "Am I going crazy, or is this so-called supercar back to its old tricks. . ."

"He hasn't changed," said Barry. "He's still our old Schlepcar, the one we know and love. . ."

Ring . . . Rinnnnnnng!

"Okay, Okay!!!" shouted the announcer. "Put 'em on."

"Hello!" he yelled into the speaker.

After a moment of surprised silence, a booming voice said, "Is this 50 Minutes? That Honkwell character is the joker who called himself Captain Hornblower, put sand in the crankcase of my car and charged me \$150.95 for repairs. . ."

"A bargain!" protested Honkwell from beneath Schlepcar.

"Thank you," said the announcer. "Next call."

A man's gravelly voice filled the room. "That guy called himself Si Fon, said he was Chinese . . . and put chop suey into my gas tank. What bugs me is that that goop got only 9 miles per gallon. . ."

Ring . . . Ring . . . Rinnnnngggggg!

The announcer kicked the speaker and covered his ears. The audience stood on their

seats, cheering.

"Hello . . . Hello?" said the last caller. "50 Minutes? My name is Minerva. I want you to lock up that bogus car doctor. He put cola instead of antifreeze into my radiator. All that's left is the door handle that came off when I had to bail out half-way home. . ."

"That ought to nail you, *mister!*" chuckled C.C., peering over Schlep's side at the guilty party.

SUDDENLY A POLICEMAN APPEARED. "You're under arrest for mechanical malpractice and operating without a license." As he bent down to put the handcuffs on Honkwell, still sprawled under Schlep, an unmistakable sound filled the studio.

Honk! Honk!! Varoom. . .

Zap! Gunning his powerful engines, Wonderbug cast off his seatbelts, tying Dr. Honkwell firmly to his underside, and took to the air before the astonished gaze of the announcer, the policeman, the entire studio audience and two million viewers.

"That's okay, officer," yelled Barry as the three kids flew off in Wonderbug, "we'll drop him off at the police station on the way home!"

And that, folks, is the way it was.

THE END

KAPTAIN KOOL AND THE KONGS

HI THERE, GANG! LET
ME INTRODUCE YOU TO
OUR FAVORITE LAUGH
RIOT, AN ENDANGERED
SPECIES CALLED TURKEY
...WITH "*TURKEYS
FROM THE TURKEY.*"

IM TURKEY AND THIS IS MY
POEM:

*"Grass is blue
Envy is green . . .
My pad is dirty,
But I'm CLEAN!
Now that's important
If you're on TV . . .
Especially,
If you want to be like me.
Now who in the world
Would want to be
This great big Turkey
With the beak you see?
A guy named Alice?
A girl named Stu?
I can't imagine
That it would be YOU!"*

DIGFOOT AND WILDBOY

The Abominable Snowman

"Pull, Bigfoot! Pull!"
Wildboy yelled.



Eight years ago the gentle giant, BIGFOOT, found an orphaned child running wild in the mountains. He took him as his own and raised him to be WILDBOY...

THE PONY WHIPPED DOWN the side of the mountain at breakneck speed. White foam lathered his mouth. It was hard to see whether the shapeless mass on his back was a sack of

potatoes or a human being.

"Looks like Susie's pony!" Ranger Lucas ran into the path of the wild-eyed palomino. "Whoa, Randy, whoa!"

He fired his pistol into the air.

The animal was startled into stillness. Quickly Ranger Lucas walked over, grasped the pony's bridle and led him toward the hitching post in front of the

cabin.

"Susie girl, are you all right?"

She shook her head yes, unable to speak. He untangled the reins and pulled her from her mount.

"It's okay, honey." He hugged her. "Just a scare. Don't know how you managed to hang onto the saddle like that!"

"Daaaaddy!" she sobbed.

"There, there, girl. You

just settle down and tell me all about it while I make you some cocoa."

His arm around her, Ranger Lucas led Susie into the cabin.

"Daddy, Randy bolted just as I was mounting him. I didn't even have the chance to swing my leg over the saddle..."

"Just sit here while I fix the cocoa." Ranger Lucas mixed the drink, lit the stove and placed it on top to heat. "There! Be ready in a few minutes." He put his arm around Susie. "Now tell me all about it. What scared Randy anyway?"

"Well you know all that talk about a monster... the livestock that's been missing lately... the strange footprints."

"I thought I told you to leave that to us! You didn't try to track down that critter yourself, did you?" Ranger Lucas knew his daughter.

"Well... I tried to follow the footprints behind farmer Moulter's henhouse, but they disappeared. So I went for a ride in the mountains..."

The cocoa was ready. Ranger Lucas poured the steaming liquid into two blue mugs. Susie reached for hers eagerly. "Mmmm, smells good!"

"Well," she continued, "I was just enjoying the view from the top... and then I

saw them again... the footprints. They were huge. Bigger than the biggest bear prints I've ever seen. I followed them into the thicket and lost them again. So I decided to come home. It was creepy up there. Just as I started to remount Randy, something scared him out of his wits."

"Do you know what it was?" asked Ranger Luke, chewing on his pipe.

"Something huge and furry and white... I couldn't really see. I was too busy hanging onto Randy. But I did find this."

She reached into her pocket and handed him a long, curved razor-sharp claw. The largest claw he'd ever seen. Ranger Lucas examined it.

"It was no accident that Randy panicked," Lucas mused.

NEWs OF SUSIE'S NEAR ESCAPE spread like wildfire. That night after she was safely asleep, a group of farmers gathered in Ranger Lucas's cabin. They carried guns and looked grim.

"Something's got to be done..."

"Yes, we're ready to go up there right now and clean that buzzard out... whatever it is..."

"Whoa, boys!" Ranger Lucas held up his hand.

"I'm the law around here and I don't want any shooting that isn't necessary."

"Well, I can't afford to lose any more livestock! The thing's practically wiped out my henhouse. It's spooking me too," said Jed Cox. "I'll have to leave if I can't make a living on the land."

"Yeah," said another man. "Every morning now I wake up, look outside and see those footprints... like some kind of monster's, and sure enough, another goat is missing..."

"It is a monster," shouted Jed Cox. "I saw it and I know... huge and white... and I remember stories my ma used to tell me all about a bominable snowman..."

"You mean the Abominable Snowman," said Tom Moulter. "Now stop that! That's just plain malarkey and we all know it."

"Do we? Well, I don't," swore farmer Cox.

"Look boys," said Ranger Lucas, "it's late. Tomorrow I'll personally lead a posse into the hills when we can see just what's causing all this uproar. Doesn't that make more sense than tracking monsters in the middle of the night?"

"Okay, Lucas," growled Tom Moulter. "But we'll be here come dawn. You better be ready too."

"I will," said Lucas.



"It was no accident that Randy panicked," Lucas mused.

It was two a.m. when they filed out into the still, dark night.

HEC STIRRED the campfire with a charred stick. "Well, Jake . . . guess we took care of that little filly. Haw! Sure was funny to see that palomino run!" He slurped the tarry coffee in his battered tin cup.

"Just because the horse bolted doesn't mean we took care of the kid. She should have been hurt but somehow she got lucky and made it home to her pa, that Ranger Lucas."

"Think he suspects anything?"

"That's what we have to find out. And we don't have any time to sit around here chewing the fat and

swilling coffee. If that kid saw too much, we'll have to change our plans. Can't afford to sour such a sweet deal, not when we're so close to scaring those farmers off their land."

"They're angry now, Jake. They're ready to fight . . ."

"Well, we'll take the fight right out of them."

"Do you think it's really oil, Jake? The stuff we found on Moulter's land . . ."

"You bet it is!" Jake mounted his horse. "Come on. Let's get moving. We've got work to do. Got the monster?"

Hec nodded.

"If that isn't oil," spat Jake, "I'm a monkey's uncle."

They headed down the mountain toward Ranger Lucas's cabin.

"WAH-OOOO . . . BIG-FOOT!" Wildboy's call echoed through the canyon but there was no reply.

Like a mountain goat he made his way over the jagged cliffs looking for Bigfoot. "WAH-OOOOO!" The sound bounced back and forth on the rocky walls surrounding him.

There was no sign of Bigfoot.

"That's odd," thought Wildboy. "I can't understand it. Bigfoot always answers my calls, no matter where I am . . . unless he's hurt."

Wildboy scrambled up a wall of solid rock. Lightly he pulled himself over the ledge into the heavy forest that crowned the cliff.

CRASHhhhhhhh! Was it a tree? A rock? Or was it...?

"WAH-OOOOO... BIGFOOT!" He called hoarsely.

"Unnnnh, Wildboy!" The voice was weak, but unmistakable.

Wildboy ran toward the sound.

There at the edge of the cliff lay Bigfoot, a bloody claw mark across his cheek. One false move and he'd fall thousands of feet into the gorge below.

"BIGFOOT!" Wildboy ran to help his fallen friend. He nearly missed the enormous bearlike tracks that led away from the body and disappeared into the bush.

SUSIE RUBBED HER EYES, and stretched lazily.

It was dawn. Time to get up.

She wandered into the cabin's main room and shivered. There was no fire in the stove.

Strange. Ranger Lucas always fixed the fire and kept the kettle on so the water was hot for breakfast.

"Daddy..."

She looked into his bedroom. It was empty. The bed was unmade. Ranger Lucas never left his room messy.

Quickly Susie dressed and ran out to the barn.

"Daddy," she called.

"Daddy... Lucas!"

Suddenly she stopped and stared. Huge bearlike tracks

surrounded the barn.

"Susie! We've come to get your pa. Where is he?"

Speechless, she whirled around to see Tom Moulter, Jed Cox and the neighboring farmers, all on horseback.

"Your pa's coming with us to get that critter... monster... whatever you call it."

"Daddy's gone!" Susie's eyes were round as saucers.

"What?"

She pointed at the tracks and ran toward the stable. Moulter and Cox dismounted and followed her.

"Look, Mr. Moulter."

Hay and splintered boards were everywhere. Ranger Lucas's hat lay on the floor in shreds.

"Okay, boys," said Tom



"Bigfoot!" Wildboy ran to help his fallen friend.

Moulter. "This is it! Lucas wouldn't come with us last night, and now he's paying for it. We're going after that monster."

He turned to Susie. "Go home, honey."

"No! I want to go with you!"

"This isn't a little girl's job, Susie," said farmer Cox.

"You just stay here, okay?" Moulter headed toward his horse.

"You hear?" Jed Cox wagged his finger at her and turned to follow the group.

"I hear," muttered Susie, watching them ride off. "But I'm not listening."

Quickly she headed for the mountains. Alone. On

foot.

RANGER LUCAS LAY in the corner of the cave, tied hand and foot.

"Time for you to put on that monster rig and scare off that posse Lucas was babbling about, Hec." Jake poked the campfire ashes with a stick. "I'll hang around here and keep our guest nice and comfy."

"Yeah, Jake, but I can't let them get too close or they'll know it's not for real . . ."

"Why in thunder do you think we're up here on top of this mountain anyway? Best hideaway in the country. Can see for miles around.

And it's also a place where a smart monster could start an avalanche and scare a few farmers, if you get my meaning . . . that's what we're here for, remember?"

"Yeah, Jake." Hec struggled into the mammoth white monster suit.

"There." He adjusted his claws and picked up a charge of dynamite. "I'll take this for insurance."

"You won't get away with this," shouted Ranger Lucas. "I told you a posse would be after your hides . . ."

"Be quiet, Ranger," snarled Jake. "Hec here is about to meet your friends . . . and give them something to remember."

Huge and menacing in his woolly white disguise, Hec

lumbered over to Lucas.

"Boo!"

"So *you're* the monster! I should have known. But why?" asked Ranger Lucas. "What do you expect to get?"

"I guess we can tell you," said Jake, "since you won't be spreading the word around. The answer is oil. Black gold . . . and all ours for the taking once we chase these hayseed farmers off their land . . ."

"Oil?" Ranger Lucas was astounded. "Why, in all my years of rangers around here I haven't heard a whisper about oil . . ."

"Well, Jake saw it with his own eyes," growled Hec.

"Yeah," said Jake. "No more time for jokes, Hec. Get going. And don't forget the dynamite!"

"WILDBOY . . . BIG-FOOT . . ." Susie's throat hurt from calling. It seemed as if she had been walking for hours, looking for them . . . and help.

"WILDBOY!"

Panting with fear and exhaustion, she began to climb the cliff.

"Wildboy . . ."

The top seemed so far. And the bottom was only a killing fall away.

And meanwhile, nearby . . .

"OOOF!" Using every ounce of his strength,



Wildboy pulled Bigfoot to safety. "Bigfoot . . . can you hear me?"

"Ummmmh. WILDBOY . . . hungaro . . . monster hurt Bigfoot."

"We'll get him! Can you move?"

Bigfoot nodded.

"Let's take shelter in the forest," said Wildboy. "We'll stay here for the night. Lie down in that grove and I'll go find firewood."

Wildboy wandered back down the path toward the cliff.

"WILDBoyyyyyy. . . ."

The sound seemed to come from far away.

Startled, he looked over the cliff. "Susie!"

There she was, clutching a rocky outcropping halfway down.

"Susie . . . hang on . . . I'm coming!"

Gingerly he began the dangerous trip down. One wrong step, a stray falling rock and. . .

"Hurry, Wildboy, hurry! My hands hurt. My fingers are numb . . . I can't hold on much longer. . . ."

Susie couldn't see Wildboy coming toward her inch by careful inch. She was looking down, hypnotized by the dizzying drop to the bottom.

"WILDBOY . . . HELP! I'M FALLING. . . ." Susie felt her hands slipping

from the jagged rock.

CRUNCH! Wildboy leaped onto the ledge just above her, kneeled and grabbed her wrists. She swung free from the mountain, dancing on air.

"WILDBOY! habunga helman BIGFOOT HELP."

Bigfoot towered on top of the cliff, a long ropy vine in his hand.

"Bigfoot! Throw it . . . throw it quickly!"

ZINNNNG!

Wildboy grabbed the makeshift rope and looped it around him. Then with one hand he pulled Susie onto the tiny ledge and tied it around her waist.

"Pull, Bigfoot! PULL!"

Within seconds they were safe on top of the cliff.

"Phew!" breathed Susie. "That's the fastest ride I've ever had! And the scariest!"

"Bigfoot . . . how did you know?" asked Wildboy.

"Wildboy no return . . . caramba . . . Bigfoot worry . . . find Wildboy."

"Oh! He has a scar!" Susie reached out to touch Bigfoot's face.

"I found him nearly unconscious . . . almost fell off the cliff," said Wildboy. "I don't know who . . . or what . . . did it. The only evidence was huge clawed tracks leading away from his body."

"The monster!" said Susie.

"He captured my father . . . please help me find them . . ."

"We're hunting him too! Ready to go, Bigfoot?"

The giant nodded. "Get monster!" Effortlessly he picked them both up and ran toward the top of the mountain.

ONE BY ONE THE FARMERS RODE up the steep mountain path.

"I'm scared," said Jed Cox. "I admit it. I'm spooked. Ready to run and leave my spread to whoever . . . whatever wants it. . . . Hard enough making a living in these parts without fighting a monster for your livestock."

"Be quiet, Jed," said Tom Moulter. "The others will hear."

Suddenly a sharp, high whinny cut the air as the last horse on the path stumbled and threw its rider.

"Pete . . . Pete . . . you okay?" Tom Moulter couldn't turn back. There wasn't room.

"Only a few bruises," said the shaken voice. "But this trip is jinxed. Something scared my horse. LOOK!" He pointed upward. A huge creature blocked the path halfway up the mountain. It was white, furry and terrifying, and in a flash, it was gone. Seconds later, an

explosion rocked the mountain, sending a rain of rocks and dirt downward.

"Quick," shouted Moulter. "Take cover. . . ."

"**J**AKE, JAKE. . . ." Hec lumbered into the cave, white and bearish. "Guess I scared them off once and for all. Last I saw they were chasing rocks down the mountain. I reckon if they get out alive they'll hightail it out of this country so fast they won't know what hit them. Why, by tomorrow we can move right down and claim that abandoned land!

"You talk too much," said Jake. But he looked very pleased.

"What are we going to do with Lucas?"

Jake rubbed his whiskery chin. "Well, we can't let him get away, knowing what he does. . . ."

Tom Moulter looked out from his shelter. "Looks like the avalanche is over. Are you guys all right?" he called.

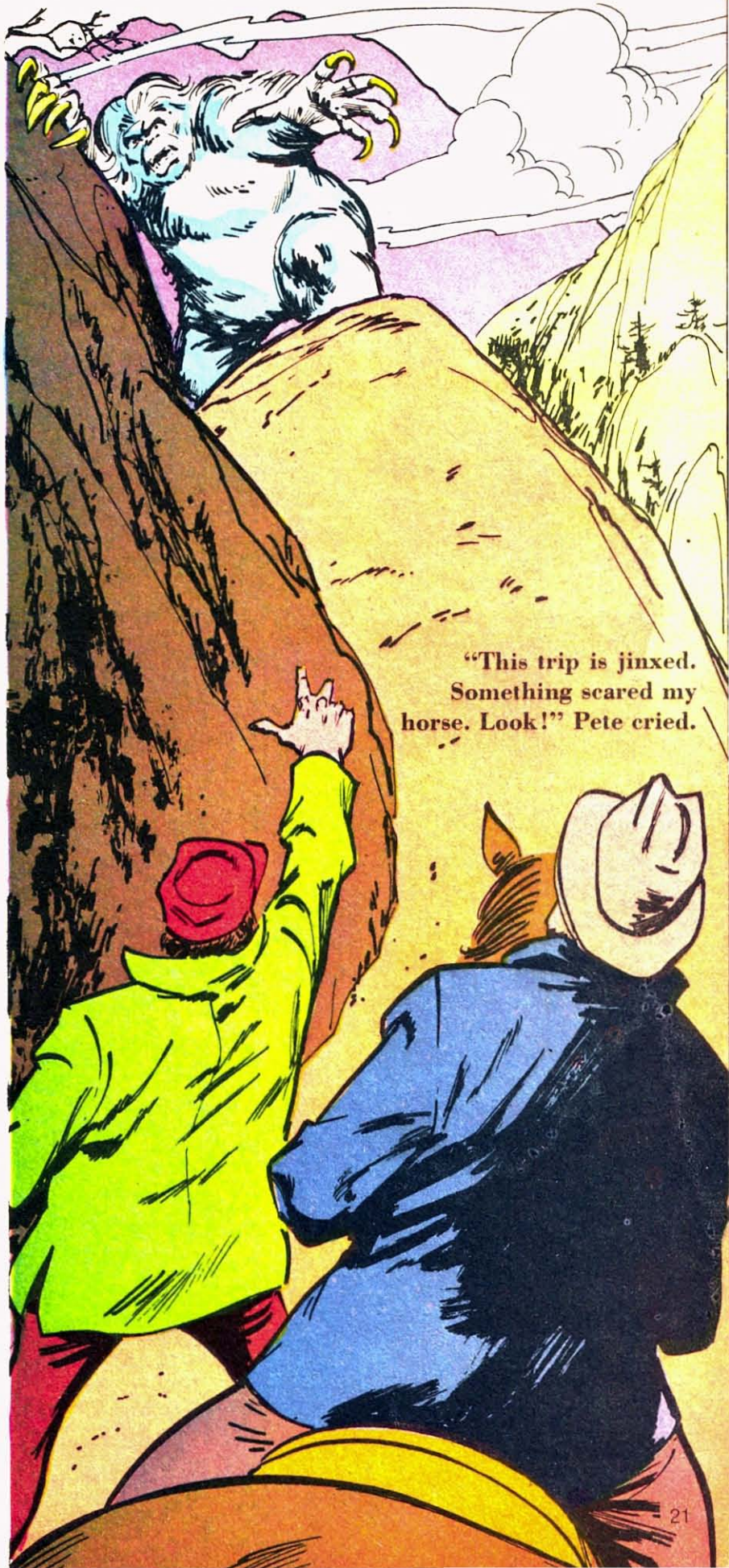
"Yeah . . . I'm okay," said one voice.

"Pete here's got a few scratches, but he'll live."

Miraculously, no one was hurt.

"We're all with you, Tom," said Jed Cox.

"Okay, boys. But this isn't going to be easy. We'll have



"This trip is jinxed. Something scared my horse. Look!" Pete cried.

to climb the rest of the way. The slide wiped out the path."

Jed Cox came out from under a ledge. He brushed the dirt from his shoulders and yelled, "What are we waiting for? Let's go and get the critter!"

"**H**EC, TAKE A LOOK OUTSIDE. I want to make sure we're alone." Jake rubbed his eyes.

"Scared?" said Ranger Lucas. No matter how hard he tried he couldn't loosen the ropes that bound him hand and foot.

"I'll deal with you later! Now move it, Hec."

"It's your turn, Jake. I'll keep watch over Lucas here."

"I said, *move it!*"

Muttering to himself, Hec stumbled off, shotgun in hand, still wearing his abominable snowman suit, minus the head. The empty head sat on a rock overlooking the fire.

Hec looked around. Nothing in sight.

He walked toward an outcropping of trees fifty feet away.

"Shhhhhhhh!" Hidden behind a clump of bushes, Wildboy, Bigfoot and Susie watched him approach.

Hec came closer. And closer. And closer. He shifted the shotgun uneasily, looked nervously around

him and plunged forward into the bush.

"Now!" whispered Wildboy. "Charge!"

With a mighty roar Bigfoot and Wildboy toppled him to the ground in his clumsy white snow suit.

"What," blustered Hec. "Help!"

Wildboy snatched his gun. Bigfoot picked up Hec and shook him in the air.

"Wait! Bigfoot!" commanded Wildboy. "Put him down." Bigfoot growled.

Hec was trembling in his footpads.

"Take us to my father!" commanded Susie.

"I'm not alone in this deal," blustered Hec.

"We mean business, mister. We want you to lead us to your hideout and flush out your partner." Wildboy grabbed him by the collar.

"Anything you say, anything you say. . . ." Hec

looked nervously at Bigfoot.

Quickly the four picked their way to the mouth of the cave. Hec entered alone.

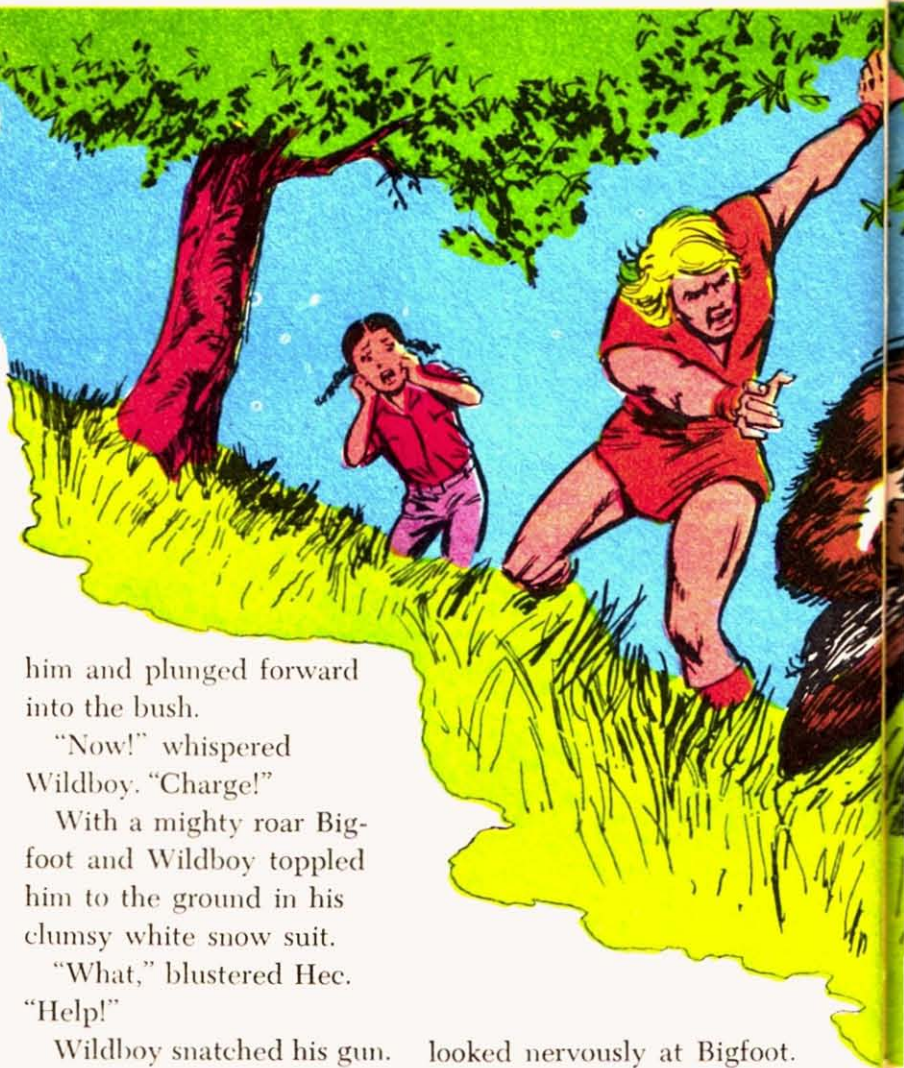
"Jake! Jake!" he was breathless. "Something's happening out there. You've got to take a look. I don't know what it is."

Jake gestured toward Ranger Lucas.

"He'll keep," said Hec. "Come on, Jake."

Quickly, Hec and Jake scrambled out to the mouth of the cave.

"AIEEEEE!" Jake screamed as Bigfoot raced toward him. He turned and





ran into the cave. Hec headed toward the path in a last desperate attempt to escape.

"I'll take Hec," shouted Wildboy. "Bigfoot, you nail Jake."

"I'm going to find my father," said Susie, running into the cave.

"Susie! Don't go in there! It could be dangerous!"

"Now!" whispered Wildboy. "Charge!"

Wildboy hesitated, looking from Susie's retreating form to the disappearing Hec.

"YELP!" A scream from the path.

"Gotcha, you buzzard! Some monster you are! C'mon boys, let's see what this bird's up to." It was Tom Moulter's voice. "We have a posse here aiming to find out what's going on. And you're gonna tell us."

"Good!" said Wildboy, listening to the sounds of scuffling. "They'll take care of him." He raced into the cave after Susie.

BANG!

"Daddy!" Susie ran in the direction of the shot, deep in the cave.

"Help . . . get this hairy ape off of me!"

"Hold him, Bigfoot!" shouted Wildboy.

Jake was waving his shotgun wildly, trying to get off a shot at Bigfoot, who was holding him high in the air. With one huge paw he plucked the gun out of Jake's hands and threw it to the ground.

"Daddy!" Susie couldn't see her father in the dimly-lit cave.

"Susie-girl, that you? I'm over here, in the corner . . ."

"Put him down, Bigfoot," said Wildboy. "We'll tie up this turkey and leave him for the farmers."

"I'll get even with you.

You won't forget Jake!"

Wildboy hastily knotted his arms and legs together with a rope.

"Let's go," Wildboy motioned to Bigfoot. "Our work's done. Let the farmers find him. Susie and Ranger Lucas can take the credit."

"Bigfoot . . . Wildboy." Susie emerged from the shadowy corner of the cave, followed by Ranger Lucas. "Who are you calling? he asked.

Only Jake was left, hog-tied and angry.

"Oh, no one," said Susie.

"You couldn't have done this by yourself," said Ranger Lucas, pointing at Jake.

"Lucas!" Tom Moulter's voice filled the cave.

"Over here, Tom," called Ranger Lucas. "Jake's tied up nice and neat and he's got one fine story to tell you. All about monsters and oil."

The men strode into sight, dragging Hec.

"Oil?" Tom Moulter was surprised.

"Yes," said Jake. "Found it on your land. Way out beyond the pasture."

"What did you do, dig for it?"

"Stuff was pooling there. ground was black and sticky for nigh onto a quarter mile." Bragged Hec.

"Oh that!" Tom Moulter slapped his knees, clutched

his belly and laughed until it hurt. Weakly, he sat down and wiped the tears from his eyes.

"You guys went through all this to get at that oil on my land? Shucks! I wish you had taken it right then. It's a nuisance. Buried a few extra barrels of oil out there a few years ago when some varmints were stealing the stuff . . . and I just plain forgot about it. Barrels must have started leaking . . ."

"You mean . . ." Jake and Hec looked astounded.

"Yes," said Jed Cox. "No such thing. You sure did go to a lot of trouble for nothing.

"Come on, boys. Lets lock up these polecats. . . ."

"We would have gotten away, Jake . . . I know we could have," said Hec as they dragged him out of the cave. "Just our luck tangling with that hairy ape Bigfoot and the kid . . . what's his name . . . Wildboy?"

"Bigfoot . . . Wildboy?" said Ranger Lucas. "Susie, what do you know about this?"

"Oh Daddy," she smiled, "I never thought you'd fall for those silly stories." They walked arm in arm out of the cave.

Hiding behind a boulder, Wildboy looked at Bigfoot and winked.

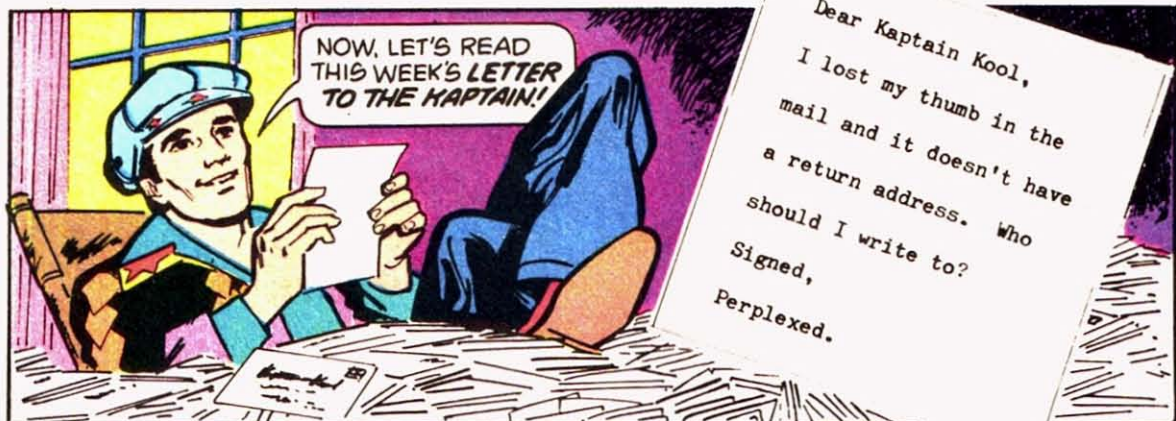
THE END

HI, KIDS, IT'S ME, THE ONE
AND ONLY CAPTAIN KOOL
WITH ALL THE LETTERS THAT
ARE FIT TO PRINT. ALMOST.
LET'S DIP INTO THE OLD MAIL-
BAG AND SEE WHAT WE FIND!

KAPTAIN KOOL AND THE KONGS

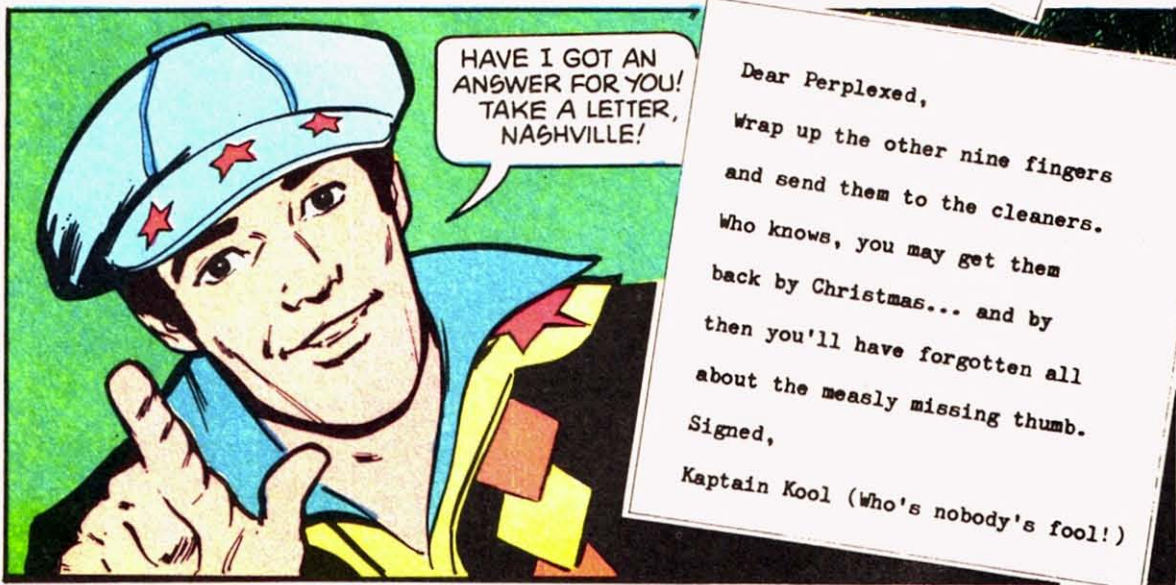


NOW, LET'S READ
THIS WEEK'S LETTER
TO THE KAPTAIN!



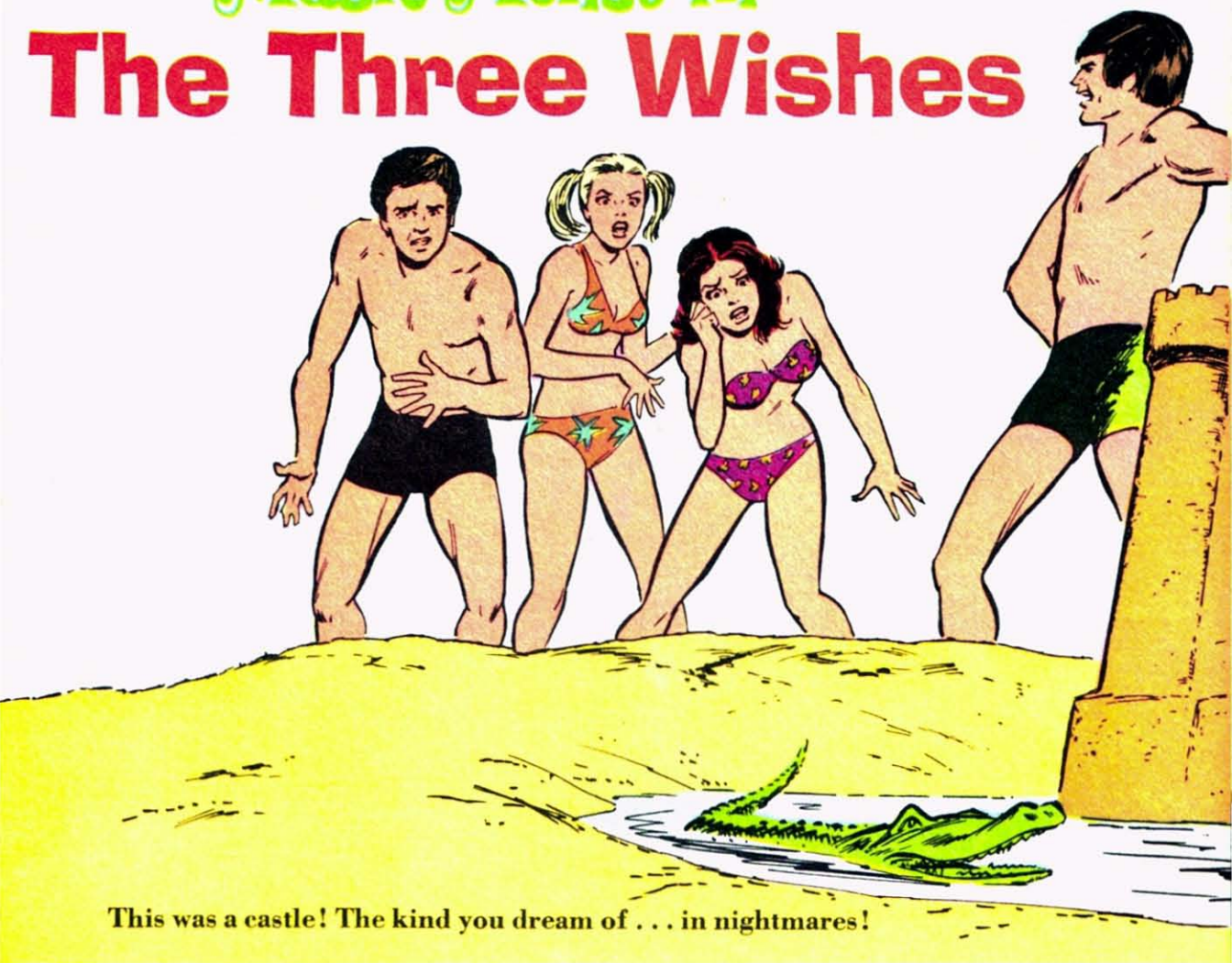
Dear Kaptain Kool,
I lost my thumb in the
mail and it doesn't have
a return address. Who
should I write to?
Signed,
Perplexed.

HAVE I GOT AN
ANSWER FOR YOU!
TAKE A LETTER,
NASHVILLE!



Dear Perplexed,
Wrap up the other nine fingers
and send them to the cleaners.
Who knows, you may get them
back by Christmas... and by
then you'll have forgotten all
about the measly missing thumb.
Signed,
Kaptain Kool (who's nobody's fool!)

Magic Mongo in The Three Wishes



This was a castle! The kind you dream of . . . in nightmares!

LORRAINE KICKED THE SAND on the empty beach. "I can see it now. In a couple of weeks we'll be sitting in school writing the same old essay: 'What I did on my summer vacation.' Mine will be two words long: Complete Disaster!"

"Nobody's even asked to enter our sandcastle contest," said Kristy. "Only Ace and his gang are hanging around on the beach . . . and they're about as much fun as a toothache."

"Ugh!" Lorraine made a

face.

Donald fingered the brightly-colored bottle before him. "Isn't it funny? Here we have our very own genie and . . ."

"Some genie!" said Kristy. "Not even Mongo could save this summer. But let's give him another try anyway . . . we have nothing to lose."

"Maybe he could liven up our contest," said Lorraine. "Come on, Donald. Let's talk to him."

Donald picked up the bottle and sang out "Mongo,

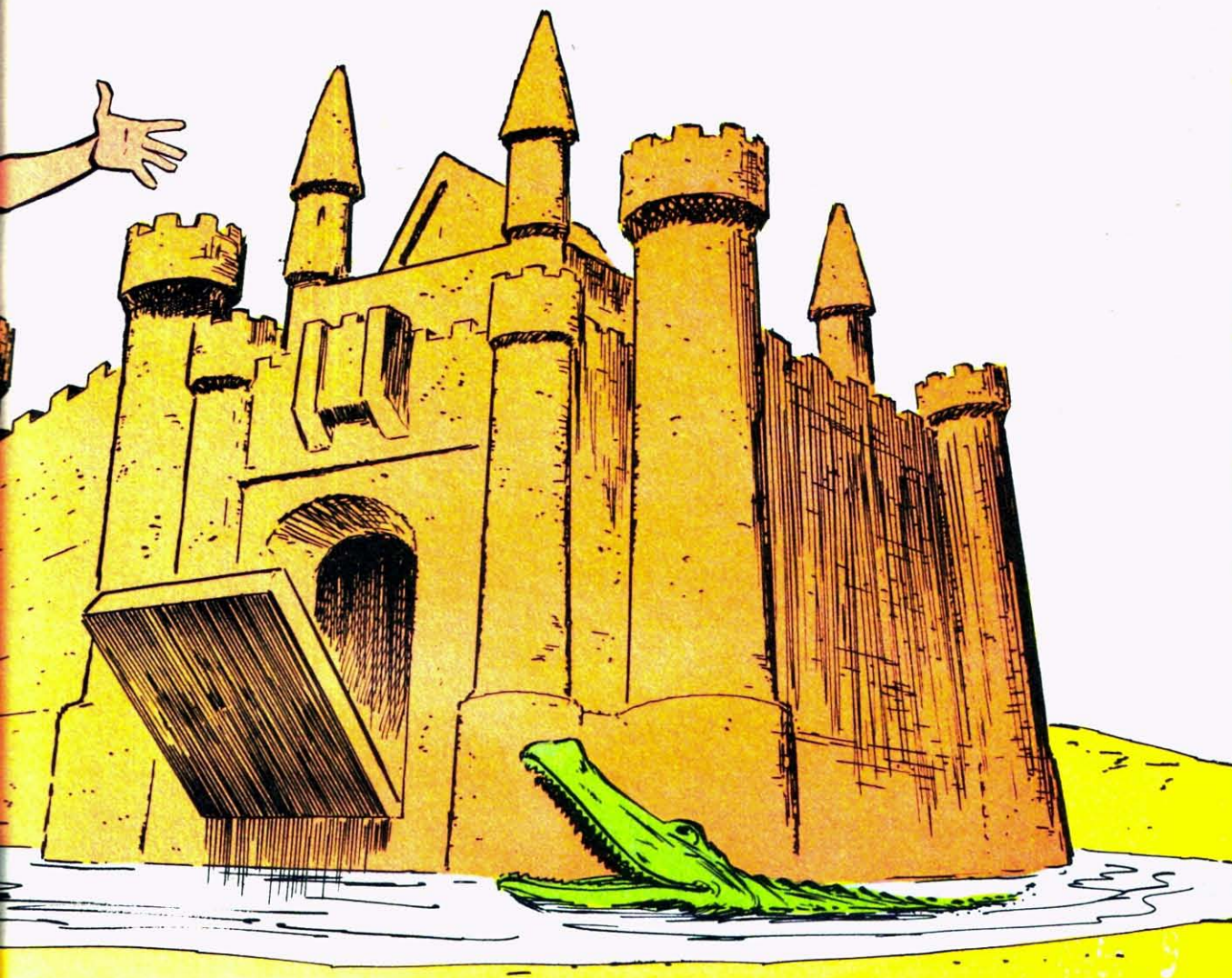
Mongo, Mongo!"

Suddenly Mongo appeared in a burst of smoke, big as life in the rich brocaded robes of Turkish gentry. "Oh Master, couldn't you have waited just a few minutes longer before calling me?"

Lorraine squinted at him. "Mongo! Who are you supposed to be, anyway?"

"Looks to me as if he just stepped out of *1001 Nights*," said Donald.

"Well, Sire, if the truth be known, I *was* being enter-



tained by Scheherazade. What a storyteller! She was on #999 when you called. Only two more and . . .”

“That’s the price you pay for being a genie, Mongo,” Donald said sternly. “Listen, get into something more comfortable and I’ll tell you why I called.”

“No problem!” Mongo twitched his ears and stuck out his tongue. Bingo! There stood “Uncle” Mongo, in his usual loud Hawaiian shirt, shorts and funny little hat.

“Now down to business,”

said Donald. “We need help. While you’ve been enjoying 999 nights in Baghdad, we’ve been trying to survive this crummy summer. We even tried to liven things up by announcing a sandcastle contest . . . and no one entered!”

“What’s the prize for winning? If it’s good enough I might try it myself!” Mongo beamed.

“That’s it, Donald! We didn’t even think of a prize. We thought just building the best castle would be

reward enough . . .”

“Lorraine’s right,” said Kristy. “There must be *some* kids left in town. The problem is, how do we get to them?”

Lorraine snapped her fingers. “I’ve got it! What’s the best possible prize we could offer?”

“Money!” exclaimed Donald. “And we don’t have any.”

“No, silly . . . Mongo!”

“Mongo!” Donald looked horrified. “But we can’t give him away . . .”



"Hahah! There's goody two-shoes' creepy old uncle," sneered Ace.

"You're right, Master. You can't give me away! Seems like we're getting on the wrong track here..."

"No, silly!" Lorraine said impatiently. "I don't mean *giving* him away... I was just thinking of a really special gimmick to turn the kids on to our contest."

"Speak, oh wise one," said Kristy.

Lorraine ignored her. "What would happen if we offered the winner three wishes?"

"Terrible, just terrible,"

sputtered Kristy. "How could you do such a thing? You can't imagine how greedy people are... or even whether we... I mean Mongo... could deliver."

"Do you mean to make light of my miraculous powers?" Mongo was hurt.

"No," said Lorraine. "I mean to use them, Mongo!"

"We could be getting into trouble making promises like that," said Donald. "I don't think I like your idea."

"Neither do I," said Mongo.

"You must admit, it would draw them out of the woodwork," said Lorraine.

"Yes," said Kristy, "but what happens when Mongo has to pay off?"

"Why not just present the whole thing as a put-on, a lot of fun... and think of some other gift that would make the winner happy," said Lorraine.

"You're beginning to make sense," Kristy turned to Donald. "After all, we do need publicity, and that's what the three wishes

gimmick is all about. Naturally we'd give a prize, but the key to the whole contest is the three wishes theme."

"Three wishes . . . castles in the sand . . . Ali Baba . . . I've got it!" Donald jumped to his feet. "Let's put posters all over town advertising the contest: BE YOUR OWN GENIE . . . BE THE KING OF YOUR OWN CASTLE . . . AND WIN THREE WISHES . . . OR, if you don't believe in magic, you can choose our valuable alternate prize! THE FUN BEGINS AT DAWN TOMORROW, PRIZES AWARDED AT DUSK! COME ONE AND ALL, BRING YOUR SHOVELS, PAILS AND IMAGINATION!!!"

"Terrific!" chorused the girls.

"Can you do it, Mongo?" asked Donald. "Can you plaster the town with brightly-colored posters?"

"No problem!" beamed Mongo.

THE NEXT MORNING the beach was filled with busy sandcastle architects, planning, plotting, digging and renovating. Lorraine, Kristy and Donald walked from one contestant to the next, checking their progress. Everyone was having a good time.

"Where's Mongo?" Lorraine asked.

"There," pointed Donald.

Both girls looked up and saw Mongo sitting on top of the dunes, enjoying the breeze. They laughed and continued walking. "Would you believe our luck . . . we haven't even seen or heard from Ace, Moose or Dodo!" Lorraine smiled happily.

She spoke too soon.

Vroom . . . Vrooooooooo-mmmmmmm!! The motorcycle gang roared onto the dunes, revving up their cycles for a chicken run across the beach.

Startled out of his daydreams, Mongo looked up in time to see the black-jacketed hoods racing toward him.

"Eeeeeeeek!" He dove for cover, losing his hat in the dunes.

"Hahah! There's goody two-shoes' creepy old uncle," sneered Ace as he and the boys raced past in a blizzard of sand. "Let's really give them something to remember. To the beach, boys!"

"Oh no!" Donald saw the approaching disaster.

"Mongo, Mongo, if you can hear me . . . do something . . . anything . . . but save our contest!"

Halfway down the dune, Mongo retrieved his hat, spat the sand out of his mouth and caught Donald's wish by ESP. "No problem, Sire . . . THIS will be a pleasure." He shut his eyes, twitched his ears, stuck out

his tongue and concentrated with all his might.

Zap! The motorcycles disappeared. At the end of the beach the newest contestants were working like beavers constructing their sandcastle.

"Not another goof-up! Oh Mongo, what have you done?" Desperate, Donald looked at the two girls. "I wanted him to get rid of those troublemakers . . . now they've joined the contest and we can't do anything about it!"

"Do *you* want to be Queen for a Day?" mocked Ace as he dug in with his hands. He slammed a wad of wet sand onto the mounting pile.

"Uh, I think it said *genie*, would you like to be genie for a day, Ace." Dodo carefully dug a moat. "Can we put crocs in it, Ace?"

"Crocodiles??? You serious?" Quickly, Moose drew the castle's design on some wet sand. "This okay, Ace?"

"Yeah. Look guys, we're going to win! And maybe Dodo's not so dumb after all. My sister brought me back some baby alligators from Florida. Ma wanted me to get rid of them, and I can't think of a better place than here!" A dark, satisfied look spread over Ace's face. "We'll make those idiots eat sand! I'm going to get those

three wishes or goody-goody Donald will be on the spot for not backing up his promises."

"Aw, Ace, you sure are smart!"

"Yeah, Dodo. A regular jailhouse lawyer!" He looked up. "Here they come, duck-brain and his two dames. Let's look innocent."

"I CAN'T STAND THOSE CREEPS!" whispered Lorraine.

"Well, you're going to have to," said Donald.

"We're nearly there.

Remember, we've got to treat them like regular contestants. Can't let them see the trouble they're causing."

"Oh," said Kristy, "a psychologist."

A loud wolf-whistle split the air as the bikini-clad girls approached the hoods. "You sure are looking good today, Kristy," said Ace.

"Groovy," agreed Moose.

"Groovy," said Dodo. "You too, Lorraine." He winked.

Lorraine tossed her hair. "Thanks for nothing."

Donald interrupted.

"Good luck on your castle, guys. Glad you could make it."

"Haw, haw, haw!" Ace guffawed. "Look at Mr. Nice Guy! We know just as well

as you do that you wish we were a million miles away.

Look here, Turkey, we plan to win . . . and this better be judged fair or we're charging fraud."

"Come on, Donald," said Kristy. "There's nothing more to say to them."

As they walked away Lorraine whispered. "I'm worried . . . what if they really do win . . . can they force us to give them three wishes, even when we promoted the contest as a kind of gag?"

"That's something we'll worry about when the time comes. Let's find Mongo. We'll be needing him." Donald headed toward the dunes.

The contestants worked furiously, forgetting everything but their castles. Fantasy castles, suburban mansions, medieval estates . . . there was something for everyone. Strangest of all, though, was the castle taking shape in front of Ace, Moose and Dodo.

Ace surveyed their work with satisfaction. "Good going, boys!" He glanced along the beach. "No competition from those fatheads. This time we're going to win without cheating. It'll be a first." He straightened his leather cap. "And then we'll be able to take care of those A-plussers

once and for all!"

A BLAZE OF BONFIRES LIT UP the beach. It was night and time for the judging. Donald, Kristy, Lorraine and Mongo walked from castle to castle, carrying little notebooks and scribbling along the way. Finally they came to the last entrants.

"Hi, meathead. Hello, chicks." Ace greeted the reluctant judges. "Out of my way, boys. Let them see our masterpiece."

Audrey gasped.

Donald gulped.

Lorraine gawked.

Mongo looked away with tears in his eyes.

It was sensational. A work of pure imagination, like something out of Dracula or Frankenstein. *This* was a castle! The kind you dreamed of . . . in nightmares! They had created an evil realm bristling with turrets, barred windows, crosswalks, and of course a moat . . . with two tiny live alligators swimming happily around their new home.

"Kristy, Lorraine, 'Uncle Mongo,' can I speak to you for a moment?" Donald waved them aside. "There's no way anyone can beat this . . . it's tops by a mile. We couldn't possibly give the first prize to anyone else,

or we'd be booed off the beach."

"Try it," said Lorraine.

"Yeah," moaned Mongo.

"I just know they're going to make me deliver on those three wishes. And heaven knows what they'll be!"

"You sure they really built it themselves?" asked Lorraine. "I wouldn't put anything past Ace!"

"Yes they did," said Kristy. "I was watching them all day and no one else came near the spot."

"What's the matter . . . scared to come across with the goods?" sneered Ace.

Donald cleared his throat, but it didn't help. "We were just agreeing that your castle was a definite winner," he said hoarsely.

The girls nodded.

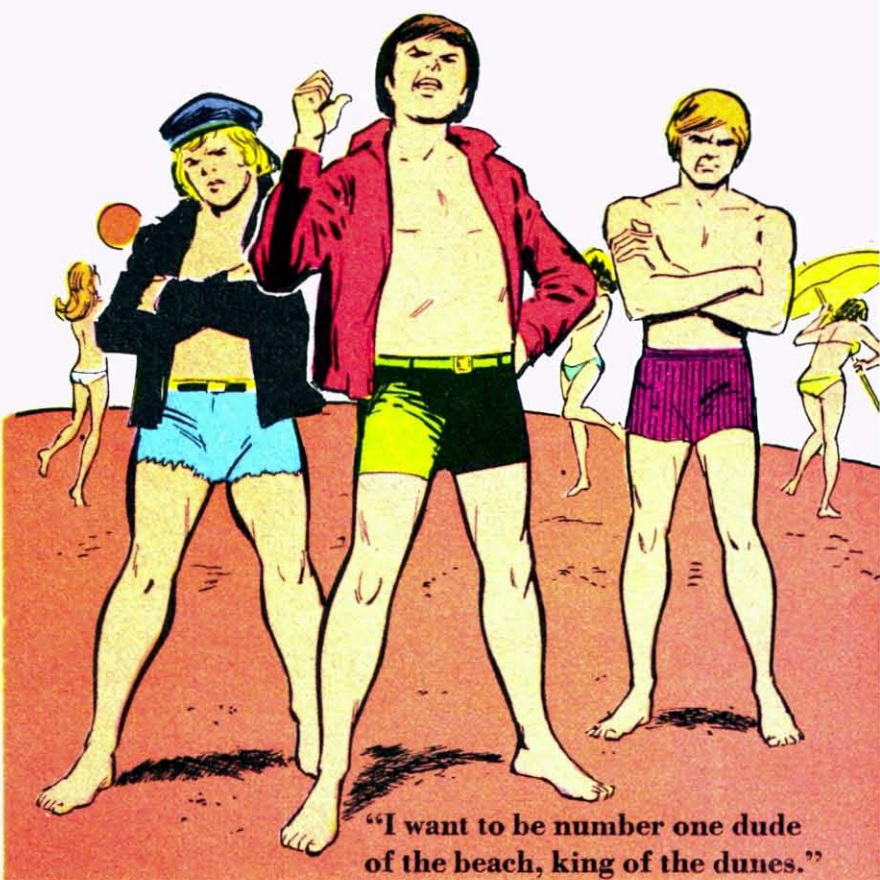
Mongo kicked the sand.

"Ladies and Gentlemen,"

Donald spoke up loudly.

"May I have your attention please? We've been delighted with all these wonderful castles. Each is special in its own way. But we think you'll agree that this year's prizewinner is truly unique: 'Dracula's Castle,' designed and built by Ace, Moose and Dodo."

A polite cheer greeted the news. Then curiosity. The other contestants gathered around to see their competition. One by one they filed by, shaking their heads in



"I want to be number one dude of the beach, king of the dunes."

amazement.

"Never knew they had it in them!"

"Wonder of wonders, miracle of miracles!"

Finally the crowd settled down.

"And now," announced Donald, "the prizes. Ace, Moose and Dodo, would you please step up to the judges?"

"Better come across, Turkey," snarled Ace through the side of his mouth, "or your goose is cooked!"

Shaken, Donald continued. "You have a choice: either take a gamble on three wishes that might or might not come true . . . or, if

you'd like something *really* memorable," he clutched his mother's gift-wrapped afghan behind his back, "something you can hand down to your children and grandchildren," he smiled nervously, holding out the brightly wrapped package, "... this, er, one-of-a-kind gift worthy of the king who built the winning castle!"

A rustle of applause.

Audrey leaned toward Lorraine. "I've got my fingers crossed . . ."

"I'm afraid it won't do any good," said Mongo, looking worried.

"*Three wishes*, eh guys?" Ace spoke with authority.

"Ah, how about you, Moose, Dodo," Donald's voice quavered slightly.

"We're with Ace," boomed Moose. "Whatever Ace says goes."

"Yeah," echoed Dodo. "Ace is boss. Ace is tops. Heh, good, eh Moose? he elbowed Moose in the ribs.

"Three wishes it is!" announced Donald, trying to stall.

"I want them and I want them now!" said Ace. "One: I want to be number one dude on the beach, king of the dunes. Nobody does anything without asking me. Two: I want all the girls to go crazy over me, like I am the superstar of the surf! Three: I want to win every contest I ever enter. Get it?"

An angry buzz rippled through the contestants.

"Imagine!"

"Some nerve!!"

"Thank heaven it's all a game. He should have taken the other present and *really* won something!"

"I'd like to give him a mouthful of fist."

"Just a minute, Ace," said Donald. "I've got to consult my fellow judges."

They formed a huddle. "Mongo, can you get us out of this?" Donald was desperate. "They've put us on the spot. It's no joke anymore."

"Sometimes, Sire," said

Mongo, "you ask too much of your loyal, but limited, genie. *This* may be a problem." He sighed and turned around, out of sight of Ace, Moose, Dodo and the crowd on the beach. "Here goes nothing." He crossed his eyes, twitched his earlobes and stuck out his tongue.

Flash! The crowd lunged forward, a swarm of bikinied girls, all moving in the same direction.

Ace turned white. They were headed straight towards him.

"Isn't he cute?" panted one.

"I want him!" screamed another.

"Ooooooooooh!" breathed a third, pulling her hair and closing in on him faster than a speeding bullet.

"Ace, we better get outta here!" said Moose, backing away.

"Yeah," said Dodo. "All those females are too much for me . . . !" He turned and ran.

Ace just stood there, rigid.

"He's cuter than Elton John!!!"

"Sexier than Mick Jagger . . ."

Whoosh! They were upon him before anyone knew what happened. Stunned, Lorraine, Kristy and Donald watched the spectacle. All they could see were Ace's feet. "Gosh, Mongo . . . you

sure did it this time!" Kristy stared, eyes wide.

"Anything to oblige," said Mongo modestly. He blushed.

"Maybe this whole thing has gone far enough," said Lorraine.

"Yeah," agreed Donald. "I think Ace has learned his lesson. Call off the harem, Mongo."

"No problem!"

Zap! The crowd dispersed.

The stunned Ace lay half buried in the sand.

"Wasn't that a bit much?" Kristy asked. She almost felt sorry for Ace.

"Gosh," Mongo looked puzzled. "I didn't expect it to be quite that bad!"

Lorraine started across the beach. "I'm coming, Ace! I'll help you!!"

Ace raised his head as she ran toward him.

"Aieeeeeeee! A female . . . one of them!"

He raced like a madman toward his cycle.

Vroom! Vrooooooooooom!

A cloud of exhaust and Ace was gone.

"Hooray Mongo!" whooped Kristy.

"Couldn't have done it better myself!" declared Donald as he whisked his genie into the bottle.

THE END



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